

## Minorities in Natural Resources Committee

### Welcome Conference Attendees

MINRC would like to welcome you to the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.



MINRC, established in November 1990, consists of natural resource professionals representing both state and federal agencies. The committee's efforts are focused on furthering diversity in natural resources and sharing successful strategies to facilitate increased diversity within our respective workforces and among our constituencies.

In April of this year, the committee held its annual planning meeting at the host hotel in St. Louis, Missouri to establish goals for the year, as well as plan the activities for the upcoming conference. The following is a summary of the goals identified at the meeting:

#### 2005 MINRC GOALS

- Increase Visibility of committee through membership increment,

attendance of technical workshops and Director's meetings, as well as promote student participation in student poster presentations.

- Increase participation in Joint initiatives with Recruitment and Retention Law Enforcement, The Wildlife Society, and American Fisheries Society.
- Increase membership diversity.
- Develop tracking system to follow students from conference attendance to professional placement.

At the 2004 Conference, MINRC sponsored 16 students, eleven of which were female. Of these 16 students, there was 1 PhD candidate, 6 graduate students, 4 seniors, 3 juniors, 1 sophomore, and 1 freshman. All students came prepared with resumes, in which MINRC copied and distributed to professional members, federal and state directors in attendance, as well as personnel directors of various state agencies.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our contributors who made awarding student stipends possible. A total of \$22,800.00 was contributed towards student stipend support, thanks to the following sponsoring agencies:

*Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR),*

*Arkansas Game and Fish, and Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).*

As always, MINRC was able to put forward workshops that were timely and addressed key issues of the day. Students participated in sessions with professionals working in various aspects of natural resources ranging from Human Resources, Research, and Academia to Program Developers and Managers. James E. "Jim" Miller, Extension Outreach/Research Scientist, Mississippi State University, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the keynote speaker for the Student Workshop, addressed the area of Professionalism. His presentation was entitled **Professionalism: Is It Important, What Does It Mean, and How Does It Apply To Me as a Student?** Tips to effective poster presentations (with a poster viewing tour), general session and technical workshop attendance were activities the Student Workshop committee organized to enhance understanding of various ways professionals communicate work efforts.

The Professional Workshop committee organized a session on **Trends & Agency Needs: Human Resources Perspectives**, comprised of panelists from US Geological Survey, National Marine Fisheries Service, Mississippi State University,

## Welcome continued...

Forest Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife; and included a video presentation on the benefits of having a diversified workforce.

At the conclusion of the Professional Workshop, Mr. Sam Hamilton, SE Regional Director, US Fish & Wildlife Service presented **The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Award** to Magarita Gomez, a junior from Sul Ross State University and Alicia Arrington, a graduate student from Southern University. These students were winners of the essay competition. An honorable mention award was also presented to Nekesha Williams, a graduate student at North Carolina State University.

During the SEAFWA closing banquet program, MINRC was proud to present the 2004 Diversity Award to the State that demonstrated the most outstanding initiatives, programs, and achievements to further the diversity of the workforce. The proud recipient for 2004 was the State of Texas. Congratulations to you, and we look forward to your continued efforts. We thank all committee members for their diligence and efforts to continue to see MINRC as a driving force in increasing minority student exposure and visibility to the natural resource profession. We welcome you and hope that you enjoy all that the 2005 SEAFWA Annual Conference holds for you.

*Janet Haslerig  
and  
Steve James,  
Co-Chairs MINRC committee*

## Raising Natural Resource Career Awareness

Since 1990, the Minorities in Natural Resources Committee (MINRC) has been educating students about opportunities in Natural Resource Careers and facilitating networking opportunities between students and Natural Resource professionals. It also has a long history of positively influencing the career and professional development of a number of students who participated in the MINRC program.

These students went on to accept full-time positions with various state and federal agencies upon graduation. This commitment to increasing diversity in the Natural Resource Career arena through the efforts of the MINRC Student Workshop Committee continues at each Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Annual Conference.

The MINRC Natural Resource Career Awareness Day provides educational workshops for students on a number of topics related to environmental and natural resource careers and opportunities and professionalism. Topics have included resume writing, interview skills, environmental careers, conference poster presentation, wildlife biology and management issues, and graduate school opportunities.

In addition, MINRC has been honored to present a number of distinguished keynote speakers who hold high ranking positions in state and federal natural resource agen-

cies and wildlife organizations. Through the MINRC Student Workshop Committee Professional/Student mentor program established in 2001, the committee has facilitated and increased the networking opportunities for MINRC sponsored students by partnering the students with a natural resource professional who is committed to increasing each student's professional network base while at the conference.

This year, the MINRC Natural Resource Career Awareness Day will include workshop designed to enhance the students' professional image, presentation skills and awareness of opportunities in natural resource careers.

A diversity of professionals from various natural resource and academic backgrounds will serve as panelists and speakers, providing both students and professionals alike with an informative and interesting learning experience.

*Wanda Jones, Ph.D.  
MINRC Student Workshop  
Committee Chair  
Florida*



# WELCOME TO MISSOURI!!

W elcome to – The Show Me State!

Ever wonder how this nick-name came to be?

What does it mean?

Its origin isn't exactly known, but there are a variety of names associated with the state of Missouri.

Although there are a few versions of the story, the most popular surrounds U.S. Congressman Willard Duncan Vandiver who served as a member on the House

Committee on Naval Affairs. While speaking to Philadelphia's Five O'Clock Club, he questioned the accuracy of an earlier speaker's remarks. He concluded his statement saying "I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me." (*Information courtesy of [www.netstate.com](http://www.netstate.com)*)

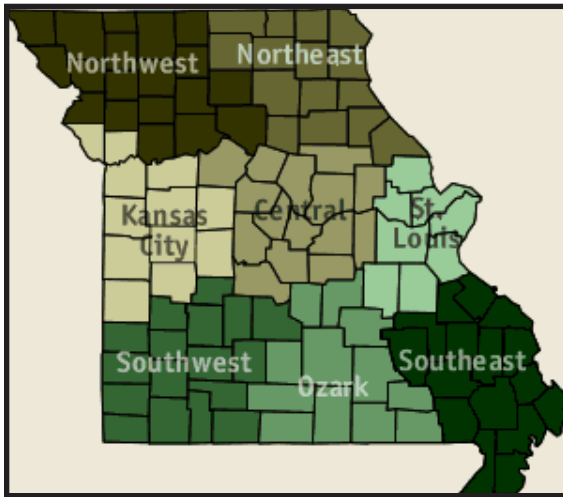
Now that you are in Missouri, where do you go? What do you do? There are many wonderful things to see, do and explore. For the avid outdoors person

Missouri's scenic and varied landscape offers enjoyment in activities such as fishing, canoeing, cave tours, boating, hunting, etc. Visit Missouri Department of Conservation ([www.conservation.state.mo.us](http://www.conservation.state.mo.us)), Missouri Department of Natural Resources ([www.dnr.mo.gov](http://www.dnr.mo.gov)), or

Missouri Board of Tourism ([www.visitmo.com](http://www.visitmo.com)) for more information and details on Missouri outdoor activities.

Want to get away in a different way? Check out Kansas City's historic 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine district – home of the Jazz and Baseball Museum. The Jazz Museum is devoted exclusively to jazz's legacy (as early as the 1920's) in an entertaining and educational format. Exhibits feature such greats as Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, and Charlie Parker. The museum includes

artifacts such as Charlie Parker's saxophone and a discovery room where visitors can listen to jazz performances. (*Information courtesy of [www.experiencekc.com/18thandvine.html](http://www.experiencekc.com/18thandvine.html)*) Baseball fans will marvel at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. The exhibit covers the entire history of the Negro Leagues from their beginning after the Civil War through their end in the 1960's. A fantastic re-creation of the



look, sound and feel of baseball in the height of the Negro Leagues.

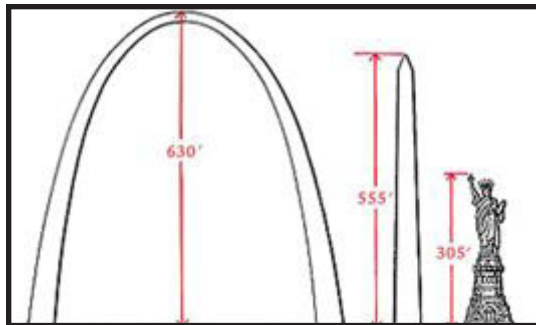
Check out the many after hours entertainment stops in St. Louis. BB's Jazz, Blues, and Soups ([www.bbsjazzbluessoups.com](http://www.bbsjazzbluessoups.com)) offers live music, good food, and a friendly atmosphere. Take a walk by the Riverfront (riverboats abound) or take a tour of the Anheuser-Busch Brewery ([www.budweisertours.com/docs/stltour.html](http://www.budweisertours.com/docs/stltour.html)). Shopping centers galore for various tastes at the Galleria, Mid-Rivers, Union Station



and Plaza Frontenac. However, no trip to St. Louis is complete without a visit to the Science Museum, Botanical Gardens ([www](http://www).

## Missouri continued...

mobot.org), and the Gateway to the West (a.k.a. The Arch). (Information courtesy of [www.explorestlouis.com](http://www.explorestlouis.com))



The famous Arch-Gateway to the West, which is part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, was designed by Eero Saarinen. The Memorial includes, in addition to the Arch, an underground visitor center located directly beneath the Arch; the Museum of Westward Expansion, retelling the century-long story of the opening of the West in the 1800's, as well as theaters with movies on Westward expansion and the Arch's construction. In 1935 an area of some 40 city blocks on the old St. Louis riverfront

is completely hidden from view. All that can be seen is its sparkling stainless steel outside skin and inner skin of carbon steel, which combine to carry gravity and wind loads to the ground. The Arch has no real structural skeleton. Its inner and outer steel skins, joined to form a composite structure, give it its strength and permanence. (Information courtesy of [www.nps.gov/jeff](http://www.nps.gov/jeff))

Great music, good food, lots of entertainment – it doesn't get any better than Missouri. Now that you know a little about us, come let us show you!!

- Lianne Hibbert
- USDA APHIS / FS Wildlife Initiative
- Missouri
- and
- Michele Radney
- Missouri Department of Conservation



View of the rising Arch facing east, 1963

were purchased. All buildings were cleared for the 630 feet high stainless steel structure rising from the banks of the Mississippi – making it the nation's tallest monument.

The stainless-steel faced Arch spans 630 feet between the outer faces of its triangular legs at ground level, and its top soars 630 feet into the sky. The complex engineering design and construction





# Law and Conservation Working Hand in Hand

## Law Enforcement: Protecting Our Natural Resources



Officer  
Leroy  
Hendrix,  
Jacksonville,  
FL

**T**he Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission would like to present Officer Leroy Hendrix II. Officer Hendrix recently graduated from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's 28 week police academy. Officer Hendrix was class leader for class six. After the academy, Officer Hendrix was assigned to the north central region in Jacksonville, FL., where he completed a 12 week field training course. Officer Hendrix now patrols the Jacksonville area where he is responsible for regulating conservation laws.

*Officer Chris Jones  
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Florida*

## Conservation: Making History In Mississippi



photo  
courtesy of Jet  
magazine

**L**aQuita S. Chambers, graduate of the Mississippi Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, became the first African-American woman conservation officer in the state of Mississippi. Characteristic duties include responsibility for inspection, safety, enforcement, investigation, public relations, conservation education and management of resources in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

article  
courtesy of  
Jet magazine



## A MINRC Success Story

**B**ruce Butler has known since he was a young teenager he wanted to become a law enforcement officer. Growing up in Green Cove Springs, a community in Northeast Florida, near Jacksonville, he also loved the out-of-doors. Surrounded by national forests, clear springs, the St. John's River, and within an easy drive of the Atlantic Coast, it's no wonder he was drawn outside to experience the beauty of nature. Through MINRC, Bruce learned that he could combine his two loves into an enjoyable and rewarding career.

Bruce interviewed with and was assigned to the Atlanta Regional Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While serving as an aide to the Regional Law Enforcement Chief for Refuges, he also provides support to officers in the field. He's had the opportunity to work at several National Wildlife Refuges in the southeast region.

"During my short time with the USFWS I have gone places that I've never been before in my life," Bruce, an Eagle Scout, said. "I've always loved the great outdoors, and I never knew that I could have a rewarding career in natural resources law enforcement."

Bruce's love of the latter began when he

joined the Clay County, Florida Sheriff's Office Explorer Post as a young teen. He enjoyed the experience so much he remained in the Explorer Post for four years, becoming the highest ranking member. At the age of 16, he helped start a teen court program in his county, where he served as a prosecutor and bailiff. He later used his experiences in 4-H and the contacts he made there to begin a law enforcement career



as a security officer at the capitol in Tallahassee.

At the capitol, Bruce met Congressman Adam Putnam, who represents Florida's 12th district. The Congressman offered the budding lawman the opportunity to intern in his office in Washington, D.C. While there, Bruce met the national chief of refuge law enforcement for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After learning about the various career opportunities within the USFWS, Bruce decided this was his future.

From the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA), Bruce was introduced to the Minorities in Natural Resources

Committee. He was a sponsored student at the MINRC conference last year at Hilton Head, South Carolina.

A lot has changed for Bruce since last year. In addition to working at the various wildlife refuges in the Southeast Region, he's had the opportunity to participate in a Blue Lighting detail with refuge officers and U.S. Customs Agents. In August, he began training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. Upon graduation he'll be a refuge law enforcement officer with USFWS. He'll be stationed in Clermont, Florida, working with special agents to enforce boat speed zones in manatee refuges throughout the state.

Bruce is no longer a "student" member of MINRC; he's a profes-

sional member. "I've made it a personal goal to try to help at least one person follow in my footsteps," he says. He wants other minorities to know about the opportunities in natural resources management. And, he wants others with a love of the outdoors and law enforcement to know about a career choice that could help fulfill all their dreams.

*Sgt. Steve James, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*





# Hurricane Katrina

In August of 2005, the United States was affected by a major natural disaster – Hurricane Katrina. A category 4 storm of immense magnitude bore down on the Gulf Coast and caused major devastation to the coastal region.

Several MINRC member states suffered major devastations as a result of Katrina. We sympathize and grieve for our sister states Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Our thoughts and well wishes go out to the families of colleagues, and residents who may have been affected by this storm.

MINRC would also like to acknowledge our fellow committee members who went to the coastal region to assist with recovery efforts. Thank you Steve James (Alabama), Jim Lee (Mississippi), Jerry Carter (Mississippi), and Chris Jones (Florida).

*Lianne Hibbert*  
*USDA APHIS/FS Wildlife Initiative*  
*Missouri*



(courtesy of  
Steve James)



(courtesy of  
CNN)

MINRC committee members Chris Jones and Steve James in Biloxi, Mississippi



The following is an excerpt from a recent US Fish and Wildlife Services article featuring three minority professionals working in the natural resources profession. Although they all reached the same end point, the journey to the end point was just as different as they are.

## Conserving the Nature of America: Three Minority Natural Resource Management Professionals Talk About Careers With the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*We asked three minority natural resource management professionals about their experiences joining and working with the Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region. Here are some of their comments.*



Alberto Ortiz

Alberto Ortiz began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service career and his graduate studies at the University

of Massachusetts under a student career employment program. He used the program to explore career possibilities in the Service's Northeast Regional Office while earning his degree. A full-time student, Ortiz also found himself putting in long hours learning his job. For someone in his position, Ortiz says, "It was a rare opportunity." Then he pauses to add, "It was pretty intense, too."

After graduation, he accepted an offer to work with the Northeast Region's Federal Aid Division. Today, twelve years later, he administers monetary grants to 13 states in the Northeast Region and the District of Columbia. "We've just finished construction of the largest grant project of its kind through the Boating Infrastructure Federal Grant Program. It's a \$3 million construction

project for public recreational boating facilities in Belmar, New Jersey. I also worked on the initial and developing stages of the new aquatic education center in Washington, D.C., and I now manage two boating-related grant programs for the region."

"The Service has provided all the training I've needed," he says. "I've had a great opportunity to help states meet their fish and aquatic needs."



Lamar Gore

undergraduate years at Delaware State University, and during his graduate years at the University of Massachusetts he continued with the Service. He found himself in an agency with relatively few minorities. "I found little cultural diversity and even less tolerance in the natural resource management field," Gore says, "but my decision to enter this career was a remarkably simple one because I believe that, if our passion is our guide, we can conquer all ills that move against us. That belief sent me on my way."

Gore found three programs for support of

minority students. They helped him prepare for continuing education, learn about career opportunities, and connect with professional leaders in his field. One of these programs was offered by the university where he studied; the second was a Fish and Wildlife Service institute; the third was MANRRS. "They helped to jump-start my professional journey," he says. "It wasn't an easy path, but I sought out the opportunities available to me and I had the passion to take on the challenge."



Dr. Kofi Fynn-Aikins

Dr. Kofi Fynn-Aikins leads the Service's Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office. He discovered the field of fisheries biology while a pre-medical



student in his native Ghana. He quickly changed his major and went on to graduate-level studies. After completing doctoral research, Fynn-Aikins entered into post-doctoral study at the country's premier fisheries lab, the Monell Chemical Senses Center, affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania.

Fynn-Aikins loved research but, he says, "I realized my real skills were in working with, and helping people develop their potential." His desire to combine research with supervision ultimately led him to the Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office, which he heads today. Because of his managerial duties, Fynn-Aikins doesn't have many opportunities to conduct research and field work; however, he doesn't at all miss the work that first inspired him to enter the field. "I'm just glad I had the flexibility to pursue what felt right for me."

*Ron Rothschadl, External Affairs Office,  
Northeast Region,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Northeast Region, go to these Web sites: [www.fws.gov/northeast/](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/) and [hr.fws.gov/HR/Careers\\_FWS.htm](http://hr.fws.gov/HR/Careers_FWS.htm) or contact Hector Ruiz, Chief of the Diversity and Civil Rights Program at (413) 253-8315.

If you would like additional information on MINRC and any of its programs, please contact MINRC

Co-Chairs: Steve James-  
[sjames10@bellsouth.net](mailto:sjames10@bellsouth.net) or  
Dr. Janet Haslerig ([jhaslerig@tuskegee.edu](mailto:jhaslerig@tuskegee.edu)).

## **Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies**

### **MINRC**

#### **2005 Student Stipend Contributors**



#### **Gold**

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection  
Service  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation  
Service

#### **Silver**

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission  
North Carolina Wildlife Resources  
Commission  
US Fish and Wildlife Service

#### **Bronze**

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Resources  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife  
Conservation  
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries,  
and Parks



## Become a Member Today

MINRC continues to achieve its overall goal of uniting administrators and professionals from state and federal natural resource agencies in an effort to develop strategic plans to eliminate under-representation of minorities and women in professional natural resources positions. To enhance this goal and increase accomplishments, representation from all state and federal natural resource agencies in the southeastern region are needed. As the members of MINRC meet to exchange information, encourage minorities and women to choose natural resource professions, and recruit more minorities, it is imperative that we share a diversity of ideas and plans. Your innovative thoughts and resourceful methods are vital and critical as we move forward with MINRC's objective to communicate opportunities for minorities. Your membership helps your agency and helps to support cultural diversity. Please help us reach our goal of having every state and federal natural resource agency in the southeastern region represented. You may become a member of MINRC for only \$20.00 per year. Membership forms are available in this newsletter from or by contacting:

M. Yvonne Bobo, MINRC Membership Committee Chairperson

Email:bobomy@aol.com

Thank you for your support.

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### *Yes, I want to join MINRC!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Permanant Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Membership \$20.00 ☐ Student Membership \$5.00

**Please make your check(s) payable to MINRC, and return to:**

Minorities in Natural Resources Committee

c/o MINRC TREASURER

South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 814

Ravenel, SC 29470